

ISLAM

For whom is Paradise meant?

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

According to the Quran, those people will gain entrance into Paradise who, while in this world, had purified themselves. For instance, the Quran says: "He who purifies it will indeed be successful." (91:9). Elsewhere, the Quran says: "That [Paradise] is the recompense for those who purify themselves." (20:76). What is *tazkiya* or purification? One can understand this with the help of a *hadith*. According to this *hadith*, every person is born on an upright nature, but due to the influence of his environment he adopts an unnatural life. (*Sahih al-Bukhari, hadith no. 1385*). This means that by birth every person has a purified personality or an upright nature, but because of the conditioning of his environment he becomes an artificial personality. In this regard, then, *tazkiya* or purification is for one to properly understand this problem and to decondition himself and thereby make himself, once again, a person on true nature. It is this personality who would be considered as a purified personality. Deconditioning is, in other words, the name for the process of self-correction. This task of self-correction or deconditioning is not something that someone else can do for you. No, you must do it yourself. The first duty of every person—man and woman—is to engage in introspection and carefully search out every item that was not present in him or her by birth but that later became part of his or her personality because of the conditioning of his or her environment. If one seriously engages in this sort of deconditioning of oneself, one's natural personality will emerge, having been purified. This is the meaning of a purified personality.

Entry to Paradise does not depend on being born in a certain family, rather it totally depends on an individual purifying himself of the undesirable traits that he has developed.

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